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College student volunteers working in the isolated areas of Eastern Kentucky have instituted a program designed to aid in the war on poverty. The Appalachian Volunteers were initially supported by a grant from the Area Redevelopment Administration and by contributions, from private corporations and foundations, of money and materials. Groundwork has been laid for volunteer programs in education, health, recreation, and welfare for adults as well as children. A primary goal was to involve local citizens in self-help.

Membership in the Volunteers is open to all students of all educational institutions, and high school students within the community are thus able to be directly involved. Adult participation includes physical labor, the preparation of meals, and the provision of shelter for the student volunteers.

The remote, dilapidated, one and two room schools of the area are physically renovated and transformed into community centers. An enrichment program includes programs in reading, arithmetic, and communication; the preparation of special materials designed to develop skills; and provision for a tutoring service. Health and recreation programs, including provisions for hot lunches and improvement of existing water supplies, are developed. Classes in literacy, domestic skills, health, and sanitation improvement are set up for adults of the community.

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Appalachian Volunteers Begin War on Poverty in

Eastern Kentucky

Your attention is called to a new, imaginative, and remarkably successful program of college student volunteers working in the isolated areas of Eastern Kentucky. Initially supported by a $50,000 grant from the Area Redevelopment Administration and by contributions of money and materials from private corporations and foundations, the Appalachian Volunteers have, since last December, sent rapidly growing numbers of college and university students to the remote, dilapidated one- and two-room school houses of Eastern Kentucky. There, beginning with the physical renovation of these structures, and their transformation into the cores of new 'community centers,' student volunteers have begun to lay the groundwork for volunteer programs in education, health, recreation, and welfare - for adults as well as children. Their primary goal is to involve local citizens in the process of self-help.

As this program develops, we feel it can have a great impact on Eastern Kentucky, on Appalachia, and on a nation just beginning a massive assault on poverty. The Louisville Courier-Journal said, in an editorial on March 19, that the Appalachian Volunteers "have done more good per dollar spent than any group, governmental or private, in the history of depressed areas."

We enclose that editorial, a story from the Courier-Journal - and the "First Report" of Appalachian Volunteers.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
Office of Education

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APPALACHIAN VOLUNTEERS

First Report

March 30, 1964

I. BACKGROUND

Late in October President Kennedy called together a group of Federal officials to discuss the problems of Eastern Kentucky. The President knew that the area had deteriorated since the spring floods and that with the winter would come starvation and freezing. The representatives of the departments and agencies at this meeting were asked to prepare immediately a program of emergency assistance for the 853,678 residents of Eastern Kentucky.

The Cumberland Plateau is one of the poorest areas of Appalachia. There, one-third of the people live on some kind of public assistance; 85 per cent live in substandard housing; and the median education level for adults is 8.05 school years (it is 8.7 for the State of Kentucky; 10.6 for the nation). Sixty-eight per cent of all Kentucky children who enter the first grade drop out before they complete high school; the figure is considerably higher for Eastern Kentucky. It was to meet these problems and others that Federal officials, under the operational guidance of Under Secretary of Commerce Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., and the staff of the President's Appalachian Regional Commission, designed a winter emergency program, in cooperation with officials of the State of Kentucky. The Departments of Labor and Health, Education and Welfare made a grant to enable, for the first time, families headed by an able-bodied, unemployed father to earn Aid to Families with Dependent Children benefits by participating in a program of constructive work. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare also made grants for a public health demonstration program and for vocational rehabilitation projects, and facilitated the transfer of surplus property. The Department of Agriculture increased its

program of housing loans and emergency grants, and, in cooperation with state officials, extended its school lunch and surplus commodity programs to reach additional persons. The Corps of Engineers accelerated maintenance work, and Accelerated Public Works funds were used to provide several hundred men with work in the National Forests.

Meanwhile, people involved in planning the winter program felt that, insofar as possible, residents should be participants in rendering aid, not merely passive recipients. It would be insufficient and possibly damaging, they felt, to design a program of charity. A volunteer program would call on the residents of Eastern Kentucky to participate in projects of community self-help, building into the winter program a sensitivity to local needs and local problems. It would demonstrate that Kentuckians feel a basic commitment to their own development and a responsibility to participate in it. Finally, a program in which Kentuckians were involved in helping themselves would help insure continued action after the withdrawal of emergency Federal assistance.

It was decided that college and university students -- highly motivated, action-oriented and relatively easily mobilized -- should be called upon for assistance. A cursory contact with nineteen campuses in Eastern Kentucky indicated that all would be willing to participate. Upon short notice more than 300 students offered to spend most of their Christmas vacation in volunteer activities.

The need in Eastern Kentucky is so overwhelming that it was difficult to know where to begin. The median family income in the area is approximately $2,000; that is, $1,000 below the poverty line, $2,000

below the median for the state, and $3,600 below the national median. Those involved in planning the program reasoned that, since a principal source of poverty lay in the schools, and since colleges might be especially sympathetic to a program which attacked poverty at this source, school based projects might be undertaken first.

There are 1,004 one- and two-room schoolhouses in Eastern Kentucky, attended by 27,146 children, 20.5 per cent of the school population of the area. In Pike County, for example, there are 82 of these buildings, attended by 2,580 children; in Perry County 58, attended by 2,140; in Knott County 44, attended by 1,472; and in Leslie 56, attended by 1,389.

The typical one-room schoolhouse is a greying, wood-frame building with ill-fitting windows and cracked floors which permit a constant rush of cold winter wind. Near the single, pot-bellied stove children are uncomfortably hot; further away they must wear their coats. In many instances there is no toilet. (Of those 82 schools in Pike County, 37 have no toilet facilities.) There are eight grades in that one room, but the "eighth graders" are already considerably behind eighth graders in other parts of the nation.

Here was a critical need, a program which would attract the attention of the residents, and which could be undertaken almost immediately. The first kind of project could be basic school "winterization" -- emergency repairs, installation of insulation material, flooring, painting, and underpinning.

As appeals went out to colleges, private organizations, and interested individuals, they also went to corporations which might donate money, servies, or materials.

U. S. Gypsum contributed sheet rock; Bird & Son donated roofing; Pittsburgh Plate Glass, Reynolds Aluminum and the Stern Family Fund gave money; Hughes Trucking offered transportation.

On the second weekend in January, students from Union College and the Cumberland Branch of the University of Kentucky undertook the first projects in Harlan County. Since then 15 schools have been renovated - the walls and ceilings sheet-rocked and painted, new flooring put in where necessary, outside walls repaired, and doors replaced. Cracks around ill-fitting windows were sealed, and coat racks and shelving for books and hot-lunch utensils were constructed. Approximately 550 students, representing ten colleges and universities, have worked along side over 200 local residents in making these improvements. The value of these efforts is seen in excerpts from a letter of a school teacher in Harlan County:

> "You have done a very good job and I am sure that my school children and I will enjoy school more. As I look around my school room this morning, I find that it has a pleasant look which it did not have before. I know the children will be able to study better and learn more."

and from a student:

> "I very graciously thank you for fixing the schoolhouse and painting it. It looks better and I feel better when I'm in it. And I think you should do the same for other schools that are in the position that ours was. I'm sure they will appreciate it."

Even as work was proceeding, delegates met for a weekend with their faculty advisors to organize a permanent structure - Appalachian Volunteers - to direct and coordinate a permanent and expanding voluntary effort. The Area Redevelopment Administration of the U. S. Department of Commerce has provided a technical assistance grant of $50,000 to staff the regional organization for the first

year. In addition to providing funds, ARA staff members in Kentucky will serve in an advisory capacity as the program develops.

Then, as school "winterization" projects continued, a committee designated by the conference drafted a set of bylaws which was officially adopted at a second meeting at Berea on March 14. In it the goals of the program are defined as:

1. To involve the citizens of the region in the process of meeting community needs by providing capable and highly motivated people to assist in projects in areas such as education, health, recreation and human welfare.

2. To provide an organization through which students can assist their fellow citizens and, at the same time, participate in valuable learning experiences.

3. To relate existing programs to areas of unmet human need and to initiate programs which look to lasting solutions of the region's problems.

4. To demonstrate to the region and the nation the importance and usefulness of a self-help component in programs aimed at improving conditions of life.

The work, concentrated initially on projects of school renovation, will soon be broadened to include many kinds of health, recreation and educational programs - all in a school-based framework. Since a primary goal will be to encourage children to remain in school by making it a community institution in which the parents take pride, all programs will revolve around the school.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRAM

Appalachian Volunteers

The bylaws provide for membership of three types - institutional, individual and supporting. Institutional membership is "open to each educational institution that is organized to motivate and facilitate the active participation" of interested students and faculty. Individual membership,

based on active participation in one or more projects, is open to students and faculty of member institutions and to other individuals applying and participating through the central office. Supporting membership is available to any individual, organization or firm contributing money, supplies or services for the work of the Volunteers.

There are four officers - a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer - all students. Policy making authority lies in a Board of Directors consisting of the officers, a student representative appointed by each member institution of higher learning and eight adults, qualified by background, experience and interest. The officers and adult Board Members are elected by student electors (two from each member institution). The Board of Directors has employed an Executive Director to staff and administer the program.

It will be the policy of the Appalachian Volunteers to actively investigate existing and proposed governmental programs directed toward the needs of the area. Every possible effort will be made to determine the ways in which the Volunteers might be able to cooperate in the explication, administration and extension of such programs. To this end, liaison will be established and regularly maintained with appropriate public officials at the Federal, state, county and local levels.

Campus Units

There shall be a single student group on each member campus responsible for the coordination of all Appalachian Volunteer affairs on that campus. The group will maintain liaison with the central office of the Appalachian Volunteers. Thus far, formal organizations dealing solely with Appalachian Volunteer matters have been established by students on ten campuses. (Alice Lloyd College,

Pippa Passes; Berea College, Berea; Cumberland College, Williamsburg; Eastern Kentucky State College, Richmond; Pikeville College, Pikeville; Southeastern Christian College, Winchester; Transylvania College, Lexington; University of Kentucky, Lexington; University of Kentucky - Southeast Center, Cumberland; and Union College, Barbourville).

Role of Students in the Leadership Process

The student officers, Board Members and Campus Leaders will be expected to initiate, develop and propose ideas concerning specific projects and activities which might be undertaken by the Volunteers. This kind of creative leadership will be encouraged by the holding of workshops for student leaders and representatives with concerned public officials at all levels. Formal internships might be established during the summers, bringing students to Frankfort and Washington to gain first-hand knowledge of state and federal programs relating to the problems of Eastern Kentucky. Positions might be found in Washington with area Members of Congress, with the Area Redevelopment Administration, the Office of Education, the Welfare Administration, the Office of Manpower, Automation and Training, the Department of Agriculture, the President's Appalachian Regional Commission, the Public Health Service and the administrative headquarters of the "war on poverty."

Constant attention will have to be given to the creation and maintenance of student esprit and perspective on the overall program. Volunteers must not be allowed to forget that their individual efforts - however inadequate and frustrating they may seem on occasion - are an integral part of a larger and coordinated movement, constantly growing in size, significance and effectiveness as a direct result of their experience.

A system of visible rewards should be established - lapel pins connoting so many hours of active service and citations, perhaps by the Governor, for exceptional effort and imaginative suggestions. A newsletter would enable the leadership and staff to remain in regular contact with the entire membership and might also serve as one effective means of carrying the Volunteers' story throughout the region and the country.

Community Involvement

No goal of the Appalachian Volunteers is more important that the active involvement of the citizens of a community. Projects are being planned and carried out with this goal constantly in mind. All elements of the community must be made to feel a part of the effort, not a target of it. As membership in the Appalachian Volunteers is open to students of all "educational institutions," high school children may be directly involved as volunteers in their own communities. Adults have been involved in a variety of ways - ranging from physical labor along side the volunteers to the preparation of meals and provision of shelter. Experience to date has proven the county superintendents of schools and the teachers themselves to be among the most effective agents for establishing contact with local citizens.

An excellent example of the catalytic effect on the community that the work of the volunteers is designed to produce was seen recently in Harlan County. There, local adults conducted a weekend project at an isolated schoolhouse which had existed for 100 years with no water supply at all. Throughout the weekend the local volunteers had to carry in water, as the children had had to do every school day, from a considerable distance. The Harlan County school system has now decided to dig a $500 well for this school.

Public Information

The success of the program will depend on the extent to which it can capture the imagination and support of substantial sections of the public, and of the industrial and foundation worlds. Private gifts of money and of material resources will be essential. Compelling and widespread publicity, therefore, is vital.

An excellent start has been made with extensive coverage and enthusiastic editorial comment in the Louisville Courier-Journal and the Louisville Times. WHAS-TV plans a 30-minute documentary on a weekend project in the near future. With the cooperation of Barry Bingham, spot broadcasts soliciting help will soon be carried over Radio Station WHAS.

Building on this local foundation, the skillful telling of the story of the Appalachian Volunteers should expand eventually to coverage by network television and national magazines and press. The development of each new kind of student activity, the initiation of cooperative relationships with each new state and federal program, the involvement of students from outside Kentucky, the expansion of the volunteer effort into the Appalachian region beyond Kentucky, remarkable examples of successful community involvement and consequent independent community action, particularly generous contributions from industry and from foundations - all these things will provide pegs upon which stories can be hung and will facilitate the maintenance of effective publicity throughout the formative stages of the program. This task should be greatly facilitated by the current focus of national attention on poverty in general and Appalachia in particular.

III PROGRAM PROSPECTUS

A. The Model

VOLUNTEER PROJECTS BUILT AROUND THE SCHOOL BUILDING AS A COMMUNITY CENTER

No single component of this model would, in and of itself, constitute the entirety of a project. All, or parts of all, would be included in the goals for any given community.

I. Physical Improvements (See partial list of supplies needed in "Project Support" section below).

a. Roof

b. Ceiling and Walls

c. Floor

d. Foundation

e. Doors and Windows

f. Painting

g. Lighting

h. Heating

i. Siding and underpinning

II. Program Enrichment

1. Curricular

a. Reading

1. Library development and support

2. Preparation of Special Materials to develop reading skills

3. Reading tutorials

b. Arithmetic

1. Preparation of Special Materials to develop skills

2. Tutorials

c. Communications - Writing, Spelling, Grammar, Vocabulary

1. Preparation of Special Materials to develop skills

2. Tutorials

2. Extra-curricular

a. Health

1. Personal hygiene - movies, etc.

2. Sanitation and nutrition - Educational movies

b. Recreation

1. Procuring equipment

2. Teaching sports and games

3. Helping form community leagues

4. Showing movies

III. Supplemental Efforts

a. Establishment of Hot Lunch Programs (in cooperation with federal and state authorities).

1. Procuring equipment

2. Arranging for receipt of commodities

3. Partitioning for lunch room; shelf construction, etc.

b. Improvement of Water Supply

1. Cleaning of springs

2. Encouraging well-digging

c. Improvement of Privies

1. Securing new seats

2. Application of chemicals

3. Digging of new pits when needed

IV. Adult Education

a. Classes in literacy

b. Classes in domestic skills

1. Sewing

2. Cooking

3. Child care, etc.

c. Health and sanitation programs

1. Movies

2. Demonstrations, etc.

B. The "Umbrella" Approach

Due to the remoteness of most project sites and the limited amount of time available when executing weekend projects, it becomes necessary to draw student volunteers from institutions which are relatively near the site of work. Naturally, when working in a county where a college is located; e.g., Pike and Knott, it is logical to use students from that college to work in the county in which they are situated. However, most of the "harder-hit" counties of Eastern Kentucky have no college within their boundaries, and it therefore becomes necessary to bring in students from the nearest surrounding colleges.. When working in Leslie County, for example, students are drawn from Union College (55 miles away from the county seat) and the Southeast Center of the University of Kentucky (40 miles away). When working in Clay County students from Berea College (53 miles from the county seat), Eastern Kentucky State College (65 miles away) and Union College (25 miles away) can be used.

County	Primary Source	Secondary Source
Pike	Pikeville	Alice Lloyd
Knott	Alice Lloyd	Lees Jr., Pikeville
Leslie	University of Kentucky - Southeast Center	Lees Jr., Cumberland
	Union	
Clay	Union	Cumberland, East
	Berea	Kentucky State

The four counties above will constitute the primary emphasis of the spring program. Whenever feasible, however, other counties and other schools will be involved.

Thus far it has been impracticable for many students eager to participate in projects to do so because of the great distance between their institution and project sites. However, all 20 Eastern Kentucky educational institutions will eventually be given the opportunity to serve as the program is expanded into all 44 Eastern Kentucky counties.

C. Project Support

In addition to funds which must be secured from both public and private sources, substantial support will be needed in the form of material resources and supplies. Here, too, it is hoped that the donors will be both governmental and nongovernmental, that material such as the following can be obtained from interested corporations and firms as well as from stocks of federal surplus property. Present requirements, for example, include:

1. Transportation - one 1 1/2 ton truck, one 2 1/2 ton truck, two carryalls, one 4 x 4, one bus, one pickup truck, one field ambulance;

2. Electrical supplies for schools - wiring, light fixtures, switches, bulbs, hot plates, small water heaters, electric heaters;

3. Electrical equipment - skill saws, rip saws, drills;

4. Tools - 30 sets of: Hammers, crow bars, hand saws, squares, rules, shovels, jacks, tapes, chalk lines, knives, plaster trowells;

5. Office equipment - six filing cabinets, six typewriters, two duplicating machines, four desks, six chairs, four desk lamps;

6. Recreational equipment - baseballs, bats and gloves, basketballs, footballs, athletic equipment of all sorts;

7. Volunteer requirements - 150 pairs of coveralls, 50 sleeping bags and 100 blankets.

D. The Spring

Activities for the remainder of the current school year will continue to be confined to weekends and will constitute much the same kind of work as has been carried out to date. Emphasis will be placed on the renovation of one- and two-room schools and on the development of recreation facilities and programs at these schools.

A number of projects are being planned in which a given college group will assume the responsibility for providing regularly scheduled weekend activities for a specific school in an effort to establish and sustain close personal relationships with the children and adults of that community. It is hoped that this will lead to friendships which can result in substantial changes in aspiration levels, particularly of pre- and elementary school children. The children may begin to realize that the world is an interesting and challenging place and that they have a meaningful role to play in it. Parents may be moved from resigned pessimism toward education to active encouragement or, at least, acceptance of it. This continuity of relationship - particularly with the children - may prove to be the program's most valuable way of involving the community in a wider and wider variety of undertakings. If so , this approach should be structurally built into the fall program.

Some experimenting might be done with small teams of 'wandering volunteers' assigned to given Branches. Their job would be to try to reach those children who will not be reached in school-based projects - as they do not attend school at all. If rapport can be established in this way with these neediest of all, then they - and perhaps their parents - may be drawn into the 'community schools.'

Major effort will be given to publicity on the campuses, both to involve as many students as possible in the spring program and to lay the groundwork and prepare the climate for a greatly expanded program commencing in the fall. Students participating in weekend projects during the spring will be asked to submit ideas and recommendations as to the specific kinds of activities that might profitably be undertaken in the fall.

Although spring projects will be carried on in a number of Eastern Kentucky counties, probable areas of concentration for the spring months will be Pike, Knott, Leslie, and Clay counties. These are selected on the basis of need and because they are located near college campuses. All projects are being carried out at the present time under the auspices of the local school systems, and discussions have been initiated to secure the full cooperation and support of the State Department of Education.

Publicity concerning current activities and future plans and hopes should be increased as part of the on-going effort to secure private funds and material resources.

E. The Summer

A full-fledged program this summer does not appear feasible. Most students from Eastern Kentucky colleges will not be able to afford full-time

volunteer service, and there are not funds to compensate them adequately. Nor is there sufficient time remaining in the current school year to organize and execute an effective recruiting and screening apparatus for a great many students from outside Kentucky who might be willing and able to serve without compensation for the entire summer. Nevertheless, the staff is still hopeful of being able to run one or two full-time projects, utilizing the services of several students from other areas of the country who have indicated a desire to volunteer.

Under the circumstances, it would seem wisest for the staff to devote most of its time during the summer to intensive planning for the fall. This will eliminate the possibility of becoming immersed in the administration and operation of a large program with insufficient opportunity for advanced thought and planning.

Application should be made, through a college or university, to the Cooperative Research Branch of the U. S. Office of Education for a grant to support the collection, revision and creation of adult basic education materials to be used by the Volunteers. Support might also be sought for a project to develop complete training materials and methods for a one-week orientation course for volunteers.

Kentucky colleges, or perhaps foundations, might be encouraged to grant scholarships equivalent to average summer earnings to enable students to participate as full-time volunteers during future summers.

The major goals of the summer are four:

1. The development of specific activities which seem particularly suited for student volunteers. Many possibilities have already been suggested in the fields of education, health, recreation, welfare and disaster assistance.

2. Establishment of contacts with county school superintendents, teachers and residents, both young and old, of communities in which projects seem desirable. An effort should be made to develop relationships in which real community status will devolve on those local teachers and adult leaders involved in the program.. This status might be enhanced by granting some sort of formal recognition to those elements of local leadership which show a possibility not only of actively cooperating with the student volunteers but of seizing the initiative on their own. This will prepare the way for volunteers in the fall to enter communities where there is already an understanding of their goals and a nucleus of leadership expecting them and prepared to cooperate with them in achieving maximum community participation.

3. Intensive research into current and proposed governmental programs in the area - Federal, state and local - and establishment of working relationships with key personnel in those programs - including the President's Appalachian Regional Commission and the "war on poverty" organization, should they become realities.

4. Continuing efforts to stimulate private contributions of funds and resources by publicizing past accomplishments and future plans.

F. <u>The Fall and Winter</u>

The activities in the fall will depend in large measure on the results of the staff's work during the summer. Hopefully, volunteers will be able to commence weekend work immediately upon returning to school - taking advantage of planning, publicity and contacts achieved during the summer.

Kentucky schools of education should be encouraged to establish special certificates for teacher training programs which would involve reading, discussion and active participation, as Appalachian Volunteers, in the life of depressed rural areas.. Practice teaching would then be conducted in the isolated schools of eastern Kentucky. Some thought might be given to the desirability of encouraging teacher training institutions in other areas of the country to conduct practice teaching programs in the deprived schools of Appalachia rather than solely, as is so often the case, in the well-staffed schools of suburbia.

The presidents of colleges and universities in Eastern Kentucky should be called together in an effort to involve and commit them personally to the accomplishments and plans of the Volunteers and to provide the basis for a more systematic approach at the college level. It can be impressed on them that the work of the Volunteers is at least as significant a part of the educational process as collegiate athletics - and that, consequently, students should be granted released time to participate in these projects just as they are to prepare for and travel to basketball and football games. They will also be urged to consider the building into their schedules of a provision for free time, with academic credit, to enable students to participate full time in the program during the school year. Dr. James Dixon, President of Antioch College, has agreed to serve as a consultant in working with the presidents towards these goals.

A delegation of college presidents and student officials of Appalachian Volunteers should make a formal presentation to the Governor, enlisting his interest and support through the active cooperation of the various state agencies.

Thought will have to be given to, and advice sought, on the possibility and desirability of extending the program into the Appalachian region beyond Kentucky and the large scale utilization of volunteers from outside the area.

Plans should begin to be formulated for a full-time program in the summer of 1965 - possibly under state or even Federal sponsorship - as an integral part of a larger effort directed at the problems of Appalachia.

APPENDIX

BUDGET

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES		
4 full time at 6,250		$25,000
2 part time		
one at 6,500		3,250
one at 8,000		4,000
	Total	$32,250
SECRETARIAL EMPLOYEES		
3 full time at 3,000		9,000
SALARY ADMINISTRATION		
Social Security, Hospitalization, Group Insurance, etc.		6,187
TRAVEL		
12 day per month per employee, 1,000 miles per month, (5 employees for 12 months)		11,880
RENT		
4 offices and secretarial space at $75 per month (This space might well be donated).		3,600
POSTAGE, SUPPLIES AND TELEPHONE		
6 employees at $75 each per month		5,400
VOLUNTEER SUPPORT		
For 9 school months, 36 weekends, 200 students, pay per weekend $3 each for food and trav[illegible]		21,600

For the three summer months, 12 weeks, 20 students - food, travel, and honorarium		5,000
INSURANCE		2,000
REGIONAL CONFERENCES		
4 at $500 each		2,000
BUILDING MATERIALS (beyond those donated)		
For volunteer projects		20,000
TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES		
3 trucks used		3,000
	Subtotal	$121,917
MISCELLANEOUS COSTS		11,610
	TOTAL	$133,527

The Courier-Journal

BARRY BINGHAM
Editor and Publisher

LISLE BAKER
Executive Vice-President

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1964. FOUNDED 1826.

EDITORIALS

Volunteers Are A Bargain In Dollars Or In People

FOR COLLEGIANS, weekends are usually time for relaxing. But during the past winter hundreds of Kentucky college people have been putting their weekends to extraordinary use, taking part in an organization called Appalachian Volunteers. The volunteers are a sort of amateur, part-time, unpaid domestic Peace Corps. They operate, on their off days, in the more depressed counties of Eastern Kentucky, helping to rebuild and improve homes and school buildings. And they are by any standard a tremendous success.

If Sargent Shriver wants to see how to [illegible] U. S., he would do well to take a look at the Volunteers, who have done more good per dollar spent than any group, governmental or private, in the history of depressed areas. Last winter, when the outfit was organized by the White House and representatives of the Council for the Southern Mountains at Berea, the Area Redevelopment Administration contributed $50,000 to get the operation rolling. With that amount, and a few small contributions of money and materials from private industry, the Volunteers have rolled ever since.

The $50,000 from the A.R.A. enabled the organization to hire some directors. Private firms have contributed much of the materials used, or sold them at cost. The labor is made up of the young people from Kentucky colleges who give up their weekends to build playgrounds, footbridges, nail up wallboard or put new roofs or floors in run-down schools.

Local people—fiscal courts and school boards—usually contribute tools and a carpenter to direct the efforts of the collegians. Usually the students furnish their own transportation to and from the county to which they are assigned for the weekend, but once there they usually are transported in buses furnished by the local school authorities. Their lunches are customarily served by the school teacher, or by nearby residents, many of whom often join in the effort to fix up the school building.

Where They Come From

The students come from the University, Eastern, Morehead, Pikeville, Union, Lindsey-Wilson, the extension college at Cumberland and Berea. Often they leave the campus before dawn, and arrive in the county seat shortly after daybreak. Here they are met by Volunteer officers and local school officials and taken by bus and truck to the remote, isolated, rickety and run-down one-and-two-room schools that are such a familiar part of the pattern of depression in our Eastern [illegible] occasions.

ground and offered a "student enrichment program" of films and literature to the children of the school at Persimmon Fork. The satisfaction felt by the students is evidenced by the fact that the Volunteers are getting more volunteers than they have funds to keep busy.

Indeed, everyone who watches the students in action is impressed by four aspects of their operation: The gratitude of the people helped, the students' feeling of satisfaction and their desire to return, the tremendous amount of work done per dollar spent, and the ease with which the Volunteers could be fitted into a domestic Peace Corps if and when one is organized to help in President Johnson's war on poverty. So far, the college students have been able to work only on weekends, but many have shown an interest in doing similar work during their summer vacations. And the permanent personnel of the domestic Peace Corps could have at its disposal thousands of young, healthy, idealistic people right here in Kentucky alone. The good they could do is incalculable.

There is only one catch: the Volunteers have run out of money; $50,000, after all, can be stretched over only so many months and people and jobs. More money is now needed if the corps is to be kept alive. Surely, the legislature, the Governor, or the White House can find enough emergency funds to keep such a sound operation going. And surely the people of Kentucky can spot a bargain well enough to help one when they see it.

In Dollars Or In People

FOR COLLEGIANS, weekends are usually time for relaxing. But during the past winter hundreds of Kentucky college people have been putting their weekends to extraordinary use, taking part in an organization called Appalachian Volunteers. The volunteers are a sort of amateur, part-time, unpaid domestic Peace Corps. They operate, on their off days, in the more depressed counties of Eastern Kentucky, helping to rebuild and improve homes and school buildings. And they are by any standard a tremendous success.

If Sargent Shriver wants to see how to [illegible] U. S., he would do well to take a look at the Volunteers, who have done more good per dollar spent than any group, governmental or private, in the history of depressed areas. Last winter, when the outfit was organized by the White House and representatives of the Council for the Southern Mountains at Berea, the Area Redevelopment Administration contributed $50,000 to get the operation rolling. With that amount, and a few small contributions of money and materials from private industry, the Volunteers have rolled ever since.

The $50,000 from the A.R.A. enabled the organization to hire some directors. Private firms have contributed much of the materials used, or sold them at cost. The labor is made up of the young people from Kentucky colleges who give up their weekends to build playgrounds, footbridges, nail up wallboard or put new roofs or floors in run-down schools.

Local people—fiscal courts and school boards—usually contribute tools and a carpenter to direct the efforts of the collegians. Usually the students furnish their own transportation to and from the county to which they are assigned for the weekend, but once there they usually are transported in buses furnished by the local school authorities. Their lunches are customarily served by the school teacher, or by nearby residents, many of whom often join in the effort to fix up the school building.

Where They Come From

The students come from the University, Eastern, Morehead, Pikeville, Union, Lindsey-Wilson, the extension college at Cumberland and Berea. Often they leave the campus before dawn, and arrive in the county seat shortly after daybreak. Here they are met by Volunteer officers and local school officials and taken by bus and truck to the remote, isolated, rickety and run-down one-and-two-room schools that are such a familiar part of the pattern of depression in our Eastern Kentucky counties. On a few occasions, they have helped some of the people in the area repair and winterize their homes. But mainly their efforts have been directed toward making schoolhouses a little more pleasant for the twenty or thirty children in the six or seven classes who must huddle around the stove in the single room of a hillside school.

On the coldest weekend of the past winter, six groups from Eastern, Union and Berea were working in Clay and Estill counties, while the entire Phi Delta Theta chapter and a large group from the Y.M.-Y.W.C.A. at the University were in Leslie. Despite the cold and the difficulty of travel over the icy mountain roads, the Leslie County groups alone winterized two schools, built a playground and offered a "student enrichment program" of films and literature to the children of the school at Persimmon Fork. The satisfaction felt by the students is evidenced by the fact that the Volunteers are getting more volunteers than they have funds to keep busy.

Indeed, everyone who watches the students in action is impressed by four aspects of their operation: The gratitude of the people helped, the students' feeling of satisfaction and their desire to return, the tremendous amount of work done per dollar spent, and the ease with which the Volunteers could be fitted into a domestic Peace Corps if and when one is organized to help in President Johnson's war on poverty. So far, the college students have been able to work only on weekends, but many have shown an interest in doing similar work during their summer vacations. And the permanent personnel of the domestic Peace Corps could have at its disposal thousands of young, healthy, idealistic people right here in Kentucky alone. The good they could do is incalculable.

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Young Samaritans In Appalachia

SECTION 1

Volunteers sprucing up the mountain schools find spreading fame and some eager backers

By JOHN FETTERMAN, Courier-Journal Staff Writer

HYDEN, KY.—A teen-age college student whistled a hymn as he repaired a ramshackle one-room school far up a hollow in Leslie County.

The building made you wonder: What kind of children must learn their ABC's in a dismal shack like this?

The answer soon appeared.

A small, shy boy approached cautiously along the creek bank, walked up to the college youth and held out a grubby hand. In it was a crushed piece of candy.

The college student put down his hammer and accepted the gift.

With that exchange, the two became friends, and the student became a dedicated worker in Appalachian Volunteers.

Appalachian Volunteers, which got around to formal organization only this weekend, is a young, lusty, growing group with more than 500 members who already have spent several Saturdays repairing, painting and weatherproofing mountain schools. The students donate their time, have no "experts" or bosses, pay their own way except for an occasional dollar or two for gasoline, and work like beavers for a cause which many of them are still struggling to understand fully.

Badly needed help—both financial and manual—is beginning to appear.

Workers Encouraged

The laboring youngsters have received words of encouragement from admirers ranging from President Lyndon Johnson to mountain children who find their isolated schools have miraculously become cozy, clean and draft-free.

College students from as far as California are begging to help.

For Appalachian Volunteers, the future offers more than weary arms from swinging hammers and paintbrushes.

Milton Ogle of Berea, community development counselor for the Council of the Southern Mountains, is overseeing the effort until Appalachian Volunteers gets its own office going.

Cumberland College at Williamsburg descended on three wobbly schools in Harlan County.

The results of those labors in the chill winds which sweep down from the surrounding ridges got the Volunteers off to a swift pace which never has slackened.

Watching the Volunteers in action is a revelation of what strong young hands and eager minds can accomplish.

At Middle Polis School in Leslie County, the winter wind has lashed through the cracks of the ancient school for years.

Mrs. Rebecca Turner, who teaches the 19 children there, watched students from the U. K. Center nail up sheets of wallboard, and said gratefully: "Isn't this something! My feet have been cold all winter."

And chubby, 10-year-old Danny Roberts stuck his head in to see what was causing all the hammering and added: "I'm right glad to see this. We have been dragging our seats up by the stove to get warm."

Wanted To Help

It was not a school day, but the potbellied stove was heating to a cherry red. That was because 78-year-old James Roberts had coaxed a fire to life and wanted to help.

Said Roberts: "I came to this hollow 49 years ago, and this schoolhouse hasn't had nothing done to it since."

Roberts stayed around to watch, and Danny Roberts flashed a big smile when one of the students handed him a hammer and some nails. Danny worked most of the day—alongside his new friends.

At noon, the elder Roberts led the students across a footbridge to his home. There, Mrs. Roberts had prepared platters of biscuits and bowls of dumplings, green beans and potatoes.

After eating and profusely thanking her, the boys hurried back to the school.

A few miles down the creek, at Lower Polls School, another group—this one from Union College—was working.

There were five girls and three boys, and the nomenclature of the tools caused busy figures in slacks belonged to girls, and she said: "I reckon this shows you just can't underestimate the girls."

The teacher is Miss Marjorie Boggs. She said the 29 children under her care "are real excited." And she got in a plug for the paint job to come: "I think a light color would be pleasant. Maybe we'll even manage to get a new blackboard and some new desks."

Matter Of Choice

But the paint color will depend on what is available cheaply. The Volunteers nurse their cash by shopping for wholesale bargains and promoting materials donations from businessmen. That's why one school at Hurricane sports a shocking light-purple interior.

Before work was far along, the Volunteers at Middle and Lower Polls were joined by Billy Boggs and Dexter Ratliff, Hyden high-school students; Carl Farler, a U. K. Extension Service representative at Hyden; Mike Elliott, a Department of Economic Security employee at Hyden, and Chrisley Day, who lives near by.

There was still another worker to be included:

Matilda Witt is 13, and has a sprinkling of freckles to go with her blondish ponytail. She stood by eagerly until somebody asked her to help. When they did, Matilda seized a putty knife and beamed: "It's going to be so pretty."

The voices that carried above the clamor at Lower Polls School were a strange mixture of clipped Yankee, drawling mountaineer and musical Spanish. All of the students were from the north—Vermont, Ohio, New York. And three have Spanish accents. These are Eulalia Serrano, Carmen Cabrero and Lucy Diaz. Eulalia and Lucy were born in Cuba, Carmen in Puerto Rico.

Besides Ogle, the only two full-time staff members are Philip Conn and Flem Messer, both Berea graduates. They set up the projects and see that materials and tools are available.

Fame Spreading

Volunteer fame is spreading and backers are appearing.

A building-supply manufacturer do-

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Ogle looked into the brief, busy past of the group and said:

"It all began last Christmas. There was talk of the crash program on poverty, and students were asking what they could do to help.

Off To Fast Start

"One day—on the phone, I believe—somebody just asked, 'How many students could you get out during the Christmas holiday?"

The result was swift and dramatic.

Abandoning their Christmas plans, students from the University of Kentucky Southeastern Center at Cumberland College at Williamsburg and Union College at Barbourville descended on three wobbly schools in Harlan County.

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A few miles down the creek, at Lower Polls School, another group—this one from Union College—was working.

There were five girls and three boys, and the nomenclature of the tools caused some temporary confusion.

To the girls, a putty knife is a "splish-splash," and the cement to fill the cracks is "that junk."

But the boys gave a few disgusted "What could you expect?" glances at their feminine helpers and kept banging away at the wallboard.

Here, too, the local citizens began to drop by to see what was going on.

Mrs. Mary Howard looked on with awe as the ancient desks were passed outside, fire-brigade style, and said: "I sure wish somebody had done this when my kids were in school."

Then she noticed that some of the busy figures in slacks belonged to girls, and she said: "I reckon this shows you just can't underestimate the girls."

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A building-supply manufacturer donated nearly an acre—40,000 square feet—of wallboard. The Edgar Stern Family Fund gave $2,000, and money has come from other companies and individuals.

The Volunteers got their biggest boost from an Area Redevelopment Administration $50,000, one-year contract which went into effect early this month.

A housing expert has offered to spend the summer with the Volunteers to advise on home rehabilitation. A group of Minnesota students is asking to be included this summer, and individual students across the nation are offering their time.

Ogle says the Volunteers hope to pro-

vide housing for such volunteers this summer on mountain campuses and invite them in for a summer of labor.

Group Studied

In Cincinnati, a group concerned with slum problems is studying the Volunteers for tips on handling its own area.

The pleas for help, however, still exceed the group's ability to repair.

An appeal from Pike County said 40 one-room schools there are in desperate need of repair.

And pleas have come from School Superintendents Beckham Combs of Knott County, Charles Clark of Floyd County, and Hayes Lewis of Leslie County.

Floyd County alone has 52 one-room schools, many falling apart. Elliott County has 26, and people there have asked the Volunteers to help.

Expansion Planned

Despite the staggering task facing them from tiny schools, the Appalachian Volunteers already are looking to an expanded program of help for the mountain people.

"I was a dropout myself once," said staff member Messmer. "Fortunately, I went back and finished college. But the people in this country have problems.

"I'd like to see adult-education programs, with these same college students helping out on their specialties."

Conn, the other staff member, said: "We have a lot of willing volunteers eager to work through existing agencies. It's a good attack on the dropout problem."

Milton Ogle, of Berea foresees the day when the program will include health instruction, recreation planning, and courses in home economics and first aid.

Ogle says it is vital "to get at the preschool and primary ages. They haven't become exasperated and hopeless about the future."

"You might just make a big difference between what they are now and what they could be."

Ogle's dream probably will come true. No task seems too big for the Volunteers.

In addition to the U. K. Center, Berea and Union, student workers have come to the hollows from Cumberland College, University of Kentucky, Transylvania, Eastern Kentucky State College, Pikeville College, Southeastern Christian College and Alice Lloyd Junior College.

Other colleges which have joined in planning and hope to provide workers soon are Lees College, Clear Creek Baptist School, Asbury Theological Seminary and College, Lindsay Wilson, Morehead, Georgetown and the College of the Bible.

It is evident that with little more than enthusiasm, hammers and saws, the Appalachian Volunteers have made a deep impression on the mountain people in a few short months.

The Big Question

The big question is: Why do they do it?

The college students who seek the answer to that provide the real key to the success.

Here's the way some of them express it:

Willard Caudill, student at the U. K. Center: "This is my third trip, and I'll be back. I don't like to see children freeze."

Tom Douce, Union College: "You get a good night's sleep after doing something like this."

Lucy Diaz, Union College: "This is my fifth—or maybe sixth—trip. I love it. I'd like to be a social worker and do something like I'm doing right now."

Jack Rivel, Union College: "I got about 15 letters from kids thanking us for the work and the pretty colors. It does something to you inside."

The friendships between students and mountaineer, Ogle believes, is the most significant accomplishment of the project.

"I feel the personal contacts can finally begin to get at the problems of which poverty and underdevelopment are symptoms," he said.

The friendships show in many ways.

They show when mountain mothers let college girls take their babies to the schools to show them off. And friendship shows in the mounting stack of "thank you" letters in Ogle's office.

The scrawled notes from children in many hollows all tell the same story:

"This schoolhouse wasn't any good, but now it is something you can call a school. ...

"Thank you for fixing the bathroom."

Carmen Cabrero, rear, a Union College student born in Puerto Rico, and Matilda Witt, 13, a Lower Polls pupil, patch wallboard joints.